ISSUE #13
OCTOBER, 1965
R. MILLER '65

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CAPA-alpha #13 — Oct., 1965

Central Mailer: Jerry G. Bails, 22529 Karam Ct., Warren, Mich. 48091

mc: mailing comments including

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*First contribution. Please send your vote of approval or disapproval of this applicant for membership within the next 15 days.
**Reapplying for membership after a brief lapse due to difficulties with his printer and a change of residence. Your approval is requested, although technically the By-Laws call for a 6-month wait. Just another good example of our failure to anticipate all contingencies in the By-Laws. Still, the By-Laws have provided some very essential guideiines. Without them, I'm sure we would have had more problems than we do now.

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K-a is distributed monthly solely to members of CAPA-alpha. On occasion, a few sample copies are available that consist of overprintings of various features (primarily those duplicated by the Central Mailer). These are sold at cost on a one-per-customer basis, in order to give non-members some notion of what K-a is about. Information about membership in CAPA-alpha is available for a 5¢ stamp from the Central Mailer. Deadline is always the first day of the month.

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NOTES TO MEMBERS: (Checked items apply to you.)
___Please remit $1.00 to cover future mailing costs.
___Please wrap your contribution more securely.
___You owe a minimum of ___ pages in the next issue to maintain membership.

****

5th printing of WORLD OF LI'L ABNER (Ballantine) is now on sale.

WATER

Nº 7

HEAVY

Written by Fred Patten, and published on the LASFS Rex Rotary, September 26, 1965.
Intended for CAPA-alpha, Thirteenth Mailing, October 1965.
Address: 1825 Greenfield Ave., Los Angeles, Calif., 90025.. Phone: 213 GR 3-6321.

Down with Ultra, the Multi-Alien! Bring back Tommy Tomorrow!

Salamander Press no. 126.

[']

Ill fortune hath befallen me this Summer, not the least of which was losing my job and having to cancel my trip to Europe. However, another job has been found, a trip abroad is still hoped for sometime in the next couple of years, I've finished most of those projects I'd promised people, and now I'm ready to pick up my activity in K-a again — just in time to keep from being dropped, too.

The motto this issue was inspired by the appearance of DC's latest super-hero, in the current MYSTERY IN SPACE (#103). If there is any more inane and unattractive character around than Ultra, "the Multi-Alien", I don't want to see him. However, I am glad to see that Jack Schiff is still interested in working on a futurific s-f series -- there aren't enough good ones around today -- and he's got Lee Elias, who is one of the top artists in the field. Why not, then, revive Tommy Tomorrow in MYSTERY IN SPACE, instead of creating a new series about the quadripartitely-unbelievable Ultra? I presume that Tommy Tomorrow is still a popular character with readers, even if he didn't win his own comic book; while frankly, I don't see how <u>anybody</u> can ever identify with Ultra. (Talk about your sick super-heroes, Richard Kyle!) Elias has already proved that he can do a good job with Tommy (a better job than he's doing with Adam Strange right now); why not let him continue this character-series in the pages of MYSTERY IN SPACE?

I suppose you've all seen the new SUPERMAN series by now, the "Future Superman of 2965". (This first story, obviously by Ed Hamilton, is the best story that's appeared in any of Weisinger's magazines for several months now.) Did you note in the splash panel, among all the statutes of the Supermen of the past, that of Superman I is discernably dated "1920-19--"? Is this just something that the artist threw in, that made it past the editorial eye, or has Mort Weisinger finally decided to extend his intricately-built-up history of Superman's life to telling us when the Man of Steel was born, and giving us some hint of his ultimate demise? 1920 would work out just about right; that would make Supe about 19 when he moved to Metropolis and started his adult career, and make him about 45 now -- a little young and a little old, respectively, but still believable. Indeed, about the only date that could be believable! (I also seem to recall Al Capone appearing in a Super-Baby story; that'd fit, too.) And, if the 19-- death-date is also seriously meant, that means we can expect the death of Superman before he's 80. Well, it's nice to know that Weisinger isn't planning to continue working him long after he's old and gray. By the way, looking at Klar Ken T5477 and Lyra 3916 (hair styles especially), do they remind you of anybody?

A couple of issues back (of HW, not K-a), I reported on Sam and the Superdroop, a juvenile novel that was devoted, destructively, to the theme of comic books. There is a similar story, though a much lighter one, in another juvenile book, entitled:

The Half-Pint Jinni and Other Stories, by Maurice Dolbier, illus. by Allan Thomas. New York, Random House, 1948. 242 p. $2.50.

The particular story in this collection of Arabian-Nights-like tales that features a comic book super-hero is "Meeting of the Powers", covering pgs. 179-206. In this, a 20th-century comic book super-hero and two kid companions travel back to 8th-century Arabia while trying to get to the 30th century, and tangle with a local jinni with a penchant for practical jokes. The jinni wins.

Unlike Munro Leaf's moral diatribe against the mind-rotting qualities of comic books, "Meeting of the Powers" is good-natured fun. Basically, Mr. Dolbier is just giving equal time to the other side. There are lots of comic book stories in which an ancient Arabian jinni comes into our time and battles with one of our super-heroes, right? And the super-hero always wins, right? Well, Mr. Dolbier has just switched things around so that the super-hero goes into the past, fights the jinni on his home ground, and loses for a change. Turnabout is fair play; we aren't going to be poor sports about it, are we, now?

The super-hero is Captain Jett Powers (no relation to the genuine comic book character of that name, and probably a coincidence, I'd guess), and his "two constant companions" -- "pretty Sue and sturdy Steve". As I said, they were trying to get to the 30th century in their time machine, but something went wrong and they emerged in 8th-century Arabia instead, right under the nose of an inquisitive jinni named Dhim. Capt. Powers, even denser than most of his ilk, refuses to believe he could have made a mistake and insists that Dhim is obviously some fantastic monster of the far future. After a battle in which "the forces of good triumph once again" (Dhim has merely turned invisible, and is sticking around to see what happens next), the comic characters begin exploring this strange land, finally coming on an oasis inhabited by the deposed Prince Fadj-ben-Elkil and his toady, Chief Councilor Asmid; two tyrants who were lucky to be allowed to go into exile when their people finally rose up against them. Though startled at the arrival of the futurians, the two scoundrels are nothing if not cunning, and Asmid, finding out that Capt. Powers goes about righting injustice, concocts a snow job about how they were cruelly driven from their beautiful Kingdom of Dahla by their wicked enemies. The Capt. is completely taken in, of course, and -- speaking only in balloons, as all good comic book characters do -- he exclaims, "FEAR NOT! I WILL RESTORE THE PRINCE TO THIS THRONE! ONE LOOK INTO HIS EYES IS ENOUGH TO TELL ME THAT HE IS AN HONEST MAN!" He immediately whisks them all to the market-place of Dahla, where he orders the populace to cast forth the evildoers (the new ruling council, popularly elected) and restore their rightful ruler to power. "I DO NOT LIKE TO USE THREATS OF FORCE, BUT AGAINST THE EVIL DOINGS OF ANARCHY THOSE THREATS ARE MADE NECESSARY!" However, the people are not about to return to their old tyranny, and sensing that matters are getting out of hand, the invisible Dhim begins to negate the Capt.'s threat in as embarrassing a manner as possible; namely, by fouling up his speech balloons -- first blacking them out, then rearranging the letters in them into gibberish, and finally by puncturing them and letting the letters scatter all over the ground. While the Capt. is seething with anger, Dhim transports them back to their time machine, dumps the rogues back at their oasis, and sends the futurians back home.

Fred Lerner, the Man They Wouldn't Let In the "Mickey Mouse Club" (he should've shaved before he applied), reports in one of his s-f fanzines on a social aspect of ComiCollecting: ".. in ROMANN #5 Rich Mann warns of the dangers of having one's letters printed in Marvel zines. Well, my letter to FANTASTIC FOUR was printed in two successive issues — with different replies! — and I received to date four letters: two advertisements for comics publications, one offer from a kid who wanted to buy old mags, and a really croggling one: a postcard from a girl I went to high school with and hadn't seen for four years, inviting me over for coffee, which led to my discovering, of all things, a conservative East Village coffee house. And that wasn't so bad!"

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This tale is told in a very spritely manner, and with a lot of tongue-in-cheek humor. To pick a favorite example, Prince Fadj and Asmid are moping around their oasis when they see the three strange visitors zooming toward them. Asmid decides that, by their size, they must be flying beasts of some foreign sort.

"Beasts," said the Prince, "do not fly in the air. Not, at least, any beasts that I am anxious to meet. Let us retire to the hut."

"I feel no fear when I am in your presence," Asmid quavered politely.

"I am properly grateful," said the Prince. "But, since your presence does not have the same happy effect on me, I think that we should leave this spot until the beast has passed over it."

"As you say," said Asmid.

Dolbier does get in one crack at comic book readers when he refers to the Capt.'s fans: "Lookers at "Completely Incredible Comics" (a magazine that cannot with any conscience claim to have readers)"... On the whole, is a very enjoyable tale in a very enjoyable book, and I recommend it to you all.

Incidentally, while Bjo was very kindly tracing the illustration reprinted on the previous page, she remarked that the artist was getting in his own digs at comic books, too, since he shows by his other illustrations in the book that he knows his anatomy too well for the overly-bulging muscles of the Capt. to be anything but deliberate. A point that I'd missed.

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FROM THE STUDIO OF JOE KUBERT

Sept. 20, 1965

Dear Jerry,

Well-seems as if the syndicated strip I mentioned to you awhile ago is now an actuality. The first week of promotions has started as of Sept. 20 and the story itself will begin Sept. 27th as a daily only. Plans for a Sunday page are in the works.

The first 12 weeks are "in the can," and from all the signs, everything looks good. N.E.A. is the syndicate doing the distributing and the strip itself is based on the recent best seller "The Green Berets." The Green Berets are the special forces men who were sent to Vietnam as advisors at the beginning of the recent Vietnamese to do.

Robin Moore, the author, took training as a civilian at Ft. Bragg Special Forces Training Camp for 3 months before he felt qualified to go to Vietnam and write about them. Robin will supervise the strip's authenticity and direction. Recently, I spent 4 days in Ft. Bragg, N.C., and presented to General Stillwell the first 10 days of originals. They'll be placed in the Special Forces Museum in Ft. Bragg.

I can't possibly tell you in this letter how great the potential for this strip is. It has the blessing of the Special Forces and should (I hope) take on the same aura for the Army that Steve Canyon does for the Air Force.

Now, Jerry -- a "shove" in the right direction can be of incalculable help. And by "shove", I mean this: If the fanzines and their readers would write into their local newspapers, asking for the strip if it doesn't already appear there, or telling their newspaper of their approval of it if it does appear (over 150 newspapers now carry "Tales of the Green Berets") and, incidentally, I sincerely hope they do approve of the strip -- this will give the strip great impetus in its outset. I distinctly remember the effect of the write-in campaign for Hawkman to reappear. If a similar write-in, touting the Tales of the Green Berets was directed at the newspapers, who can tell what the final effect might be.

Keep an eye open for it, Jerry -- I hope this strip will be a showcase for some of my best efforts.

Yours,

Joe

P.S. If you've any questions, don't hesitate to write and ask 'em.

ALLEY TIME APPROACHES -- IN ORDER TO HELP IMPROVE SELECTIONS FOR THE BALLOT, I'M LISTING HERE SOME OF THE NOMINATIONS I'M CONSIDERING. THESE ARE STILL TENTATIVE, SO IF I'VE OVERLOOKED SOMETHING, PLEASE CALL IT TO MY ATTENTION. THANKS--JERRY BAILS.

Best Story: "While the City Sleeps!" (DAREDEVIL #10)
Best Giant: THUNDER AGENTS (Tower)
Best Artist: Wally Wood (Total War, Daredevil, Dynamo)
Best Writer: Arnold Drake (Doom Patrol, Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis)
Best Editor: Stan Lee (Marvel Group)
Best New or Revived Strip by Each Publisher:

- Judo Master (Charlton)
- Noman (Tower)
- Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD (Marvel)
- Metamorpho (DC)
- Nemesis (ACG)
- Total War (Gold Key)
- Nukla (Dell)
- Adam Link (Warren)
- Green Berets (NEA Syndicate)
- Man in Black (Harvey)
- Shield (Archie)
- Barbarella (EVERGREEN)

Best Fan Editor: Roy Thomas (ALTER EGO #8 & 9)
Best Fan Writers:

- Fiction: Paul Moslander (alias Victor Baron in JEDDAK #6 & 7)
- Article: Fred Patten ("Supermen South" in ALTER EGO #8 & 9)
- Column: Richard Kyle ("Wonderworld" in K-a #1, 2, 5, & 8)
- Fanzine Review: Derrill Rothermich ("Ego Crusher" in TCR #38-40)

Best Fan Artist:

- Layout: Bill Spicer (FI #3 & GUIDEBOOK)
- Strip: Harry Habblitz ("Tarzan" in FI #3)
- Spot Illustrations: Bill White (ALTER EGO #8 & 9)

Best Fan Project: Detroit Triple Fan Fair, Shel Dorf & Co.
Outstanding Fanzines:

- Alter Ego #7, 8
- The Comic Reader #33-41
- Eye #1
- Golden Age #1
- Jeddak #6-7
- Rocket's Blast-Comicollector #35-41
- Slam Bang #3-5
- Voice of Comicdom #3-4
- Capa-alpha #2-13
- Batmania #3-7
- Down Under #1
- Fantasy Illustrated #3
- Great Classic Newspaper Comic Strips #1-2
- Schwartz Index
- Shudder #2
- Star Studded Comics #6-7
- Yancy Street Journal #5-10
- Others eligible???

Worthy of Special Mention:

- Spiderman
- Namor
- Enemy Ace
- Lobo
- JSA Teams
- Doom Patrol
- Tarzan (Charlton)
- Samson
- New York ComiCon
- Guidebook to Comics Fandom
- Charlton's Contest for Fan Writers
- Jules Feiffer's GREAT COMIC-BOOK HEROES
- Tower Publications' Entry into Comics
- The M.M.M.S.
- New Look in Tarzan at Gold Key

THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE ACADEMY OF COMIC-BOOK FANS AND COLLECTORS SERVE AS NOMINATORS IN THE ALLEY AWARDS POLL. FANS SHOULD SUGGEST ANY OUTSTANDING STRIPS, ARTISTS, WRITERS, EDITORS, OR PROJECTS TO THE BOARD FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.

SMALL TALK

K-A #6

* *

Editor-Glen D. Johnson, Box 338, Crownpoint, New Mexico 87313

printed for -K A #13

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Looking back a few years, it doesn't seem possible that so many new titles have appeared. It wasn't too long ago that the only costume- super heroes published were by D.C., with the exception of the Fly and the Jaguar published by Archie. Now, the American Comic Group, Harvey, Gold Key, Marvel, Charlton, Tower, and even Dell has taken to costume heroes.

I'm disappointed in only two of the above lines, namely American and Archie. They both have failed to produce anything but the lowest quality. I've longed wished that American would create something imaginative, but I've given up. It has been my opinion that American under Richard E. Hughes would give us something outstanding, but it seems I was wrong. Mr. Hughes doesn't seem to understand what we want or else he doesn't care to even try creating something worthwhile. He continues to state he has been in the business for years, and knows comics, etc. Someone mentioned that of all issues of KEDOR, something outstanding never came out. After thinking this over, it hit me that it was the truth. Archie on the other hand is doing as badly, if not worst. After a short blaze of glory (if it can be called that) with the Shield and the Fly, Archie has always had the worst written and drawn stories around. I felt that maybe with the introduction of "The Mighty Crusaders", the line was bound to improve, but it hasn't. If STEEL STERLING is out, I've not seen it, but it is most likely to be written as poorly as "The Mighty Crusaders" and "The Fly-Man". With better stories, they could improve. As much as I dislike the present art by Paul Reinman, I think the main fault is in the poor written stories. As I see it, there is nothing wrong with another writer trying to imitate Stan Lee, but I do complain when he does such a lousy job. My first impression of The Mighty Crusaders in Fly-Man #31 was that of enjoyment, but after their forth appearance, it was a sickening experience. The stories were written in a somewhat Lee style, but lack the adult slant used by Marvel. Child - ish plots and dialogue-such as "Ultra-Guys", "super Buddies", etc., etc., is hard to take. The bickering between the characters has no real meaning, scientific gizmos have not logical reasoning, and the villains powers and background are unheralded in the field. I'm sure Archie is meaning to copy Marvel, which is fine if they would only improve their effort.

I became interested in collection, with the first appearance of the JLA in BRAVE AND THE BOLD #29, and further interested upon reading a letter by Jerry Bails in an early JLA letter column. At this point, I only read and collected the JLA, but when Marvel introduced the FANTASTIC FOUR, a new world was opened to comic fans. This was followed by many excellent D.C. characters getting their own books and strips, which really started me on my way as a collector. After this, other companies began introducing costume heroes. Gold K ey was one to quickly follow suit, with Charlton and American coming close behind. Archie had been around for sometime, but with the Mighty Crusaders, it seems Harry Shorten, the editor of Archie

left and becamo editor of Tower Comics, or so I've heard. My question is, how could Mr. Shorten have done so badly at Archie, and then helped such an excellent title as THUNDER AGENTS come to be? The only thing I'm able to think of is that he is editor in name only, and the staff of writers deserve the praise. With Dell, Harvey and Tower Comics getting on the bandwagon, it is possible of strong competition for the leaders.

D.C., who has long been recognized (at least I think so) as the leader in the field of comics seems to have fallen behind due to what many fans lable as "characterization". True, Marvel has developed each of its characters, but I prefer to credit this success to what I like to call "soap opera". Never before has such been used, and it seems to be just what fans like. Give a hero a physical disorder or problems, romantic interest with a girl he cannot believe loves him, a little bickering amoung other heroes, and presto, you have a smash on your hands. Of course, these 3 items must be incorporated and well written. This is where Archie fails. They have taken a group of heroes, had them do a little bickering, and have expected a hit. They have one of the essential elements, but need the others.

Though I've always felt that D.C. was the leader in art, Marvel was quick to close the gap for awhile with greats like Wally Wood, Bob Powell, and John Severin. It's too bad that Marvel had to louse Wood and Severin & use Bob Powell on the HULK where his style doesn't show. At least we can enjoy Wood's wonderful art in Tower Comics, and maybe Severin will return. Until Severin does return, I'm sure going to miss the work he did for Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD. Sinnott is a fair artist, but will never equal the work John Severin did.

I have a few questions regarding THUNDER AGENTS, and I would appreciate answers for them. I know that Leonard Brown writes Dynamo, but who is the author of the other stories? I'd also like to know who was the artist that handled Manthor? The art looks like the style of an artist who once did a comic titled "G.I. Joe" by Zeff-Davis or such. Also, what did Larry Ivie have to do with the first issue? I'm looking forward to other titles from Tower, and if they are anything like THUNDER AGENT, I know I won't be disappointed.

ROY THOMAS. As for my suggestion regarding "Best revived hero of the year" and "Best new hero of the year", you said it better than I intended to when you said the Alley poll was "by the fans, of the fans, and for the fans." I don't know how other fans feel, but I'd like to know how they feel about the new entries. This suggestion wasn't meant to be of help to pros, but to fans. I'm still in favor of seeing this done. How can we have too many divisions as far as fans are concerned? As for your comment, "St ick around fandom," where did you think I was going? Giving up TCR will allow me more time for other things. I'd also like to thank you, John Ryan, Derrill and others who have said nice things about the way I had handled TCR. I'm rushing this out, but I hope in the future I'll have more time on each contribution since I won't have to publishTCR

How many have noticed the different style in trunks worn by super and costume hero? It annoys me at the way Paul Reinman and Jack Kirby draws trunks. It might be trivial, but since when did it become necessary that trunks look like burmuda walking shorts, instead of swim trunks.

[redacted] 1961 southgrove road baltimore maryland

I have no [illegible] except I read Paul Goodman's spirited defense of the comics [illegible] from seduction of the Innocent. [illegible] is willing to [illegible] a cause-effect relationship between comics and [illegible] etc. and juvenile delinquency, but the only really valid argument centers around the fact that the CCA eliminated bad comics, and in the sense of [illegible] their elimination. Trouble with this logic, aside from the basic inaccuracy (which won't be discussed here), is that [illegible] with those bad comics by neither Gaines, Wertham, or [illegible] will ever prove even to be badly written and illustrated in general. Maybe so, and I think the basic problem can be solved by [illegible], but the problem is far too vast for the CCA to handle.

The main thing wrong with comics is that they are a mass media. The comic magazines are subject to the same [illegible] which plague [illegible], radio, movies, "popular" books, and "popular" music. The reading of these publications is [illegible]. As such, they do not call for reading discrimination in all cases. They merely call upon a person's ability to sit in front of the television [illegible] "stuff," or to listen to rock and roll music [illegible] (or whatever or reading (I've seen reports which prove that very few people ever listen to [illegible] by itself, rather, [illegible] or some other [illegible] with a portable "muzak" stuck into their ear).

[illegible] the thought of millions of people, [illegible], enjoying the "they know," or the [illegible] of a life [illegible] of the novel [illegible] of the [illegible] to the former level of the [illegible], with million-dollar shows, [illegible] best war's place. The [illegible] and control the [illegible] of [illegible] television power [illegible], [illegible] by the well-known [illegible] of selling in front of the [illegible] or moving entertainers [illegible] from their throats, [illegible] to [illegible] for itself. In fact, even a [illegible] has been the case of a [illegible] for her. Thus, [illegible] to [illegible] media [illegible] to take over -- man could not resist.

[illegible] the book is [illegible] the [illegible], but the basic [illegible] remain. [illegible] seems to [illegible]. A lack of [illegible] ability to [illegible] a [illegible] would be see any-[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], or anything more [illegible] than "[illegible] of the day." But, I think, is a [illegible]. The mass media [illegible] [illegible], intruding upon mankind [illegible], use of the right [illegible], may be corrected. Now [illegible], with [illegible], radio, and world wide distri-[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

the latter.

can watch it; and also everyone else.

Wonder, and Jack Schiff's Batman.

bad. But it was not. Indeed, the problem with comics (and television, and the other mass media) was not that there was too much violence. It is quite possible to handle sexual perversion beautifully (see The Scarlet Letter), but when movies, or comics try, the effect becomes sensationalistic. It is quite possible to use violence in a classical work, as in Homer. But in the case of the mass media, it is merely an end to sell a product. Let me quote here a paragraph from a report by a British committee investigating television. It discusses triviality, which is the one-word definition of what I'm saying:

"Triviality resides in the way the subject matter is approached and the manner in which it is presented. A trivial program may consist in a failure to present the particularities of the subject matter no matter what it may be, or in a too ready reliance on well-tried themes, or in a habit of conformity to established patterns or in a reluctance to be imaginatively adventurous. . . In a failure to take full disciplined advantage of the artistic and technical facilities which are relevant to a particular subject, or in an excessive interest in mere packaging at the expense of the contents of the package, or in a reliance on clichés so as to give a spurious interest to a programme at the cost of its imaginative integrity, or in too great a reliance on conveyed devices for creating suspense or raising a laugh or evoking tears."

As you can see, there's never been a better indictment of comics written expressly about television, and I won't insult the readers' intelligence by enumerating the analogy.

I should mention before closing Section I that the biggest chuckle of all is Parents' Magazine and Classics Illustrated. They are trying valiantly to raise the level of comic literature. I suspect Classics of having little interest in this, actually, but that's neither here nor there; but are making exactly the same mistakes as the other publishers. I recall one article which defined, or tried to define, what a "good" comic might be. Both the editors and Werthem were at a loss to describe such an animal, but surely

there must be such a thing for [illegible] present something which is actually "good" -- [illegible] same.

SECTION TWO: the outer office (a story)

Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko. [illegible] wall. Or maybe Allen Austin, or Wally Wood, Dick Ayers, any of them might be behind the wall. I didn't know, but they might be.

Sitting in the outer offices of Marvel Comics is not an easy task for a comic fan. The chair was [illegible] art on the walls was not entirely unpleasant. But [illegible] That door which led to the three Marvel offices. Full [illegible] to comic fan's nirvana. To the words which comic fans dream of. . .

But it was closed and I was only in the outer office.

The outer door opened. The one leading into the outer office from the hallway. A man walked in, he was carrying a large thing wrapped in brown paper. He had a cigar and crazy hair. The thing might have been original artwork. The cigar -- dear Kirby always smoked them. Could it be Jack? The King? In person? Could my eyes deceive me. . .maybe I should ask. Worst that could happen is he's really just Heimmie Fisher delivering dead fish.

DRAT! He's already inside the inner offices, darn it! A true comic fan can't get in for Heimmie Fisher, delivering some old, dead fish, can. A fine state

The door to the inner office intrigues me. When Jack or Heimmie or whoever opened it I saw a little note taped on so that those on the inside could read it. Since I was not on the inside, I couldn't read it, but I was pretty sure I knew what it said: "If any comic fans are in the outer office -- DON'T [illegible]!" And, it added, "Keep the damn door shut!

I looked around the office, [illegible]nized by the possible proximity of Stan Lee. I knew he had been in the offices that day. He hasn't always there (he went home sometimes) but I had called early in the morning and he was then in conference with Roy Thomas. So he must have been there. Imagine. I was breathing the very air he had stepped on.

The proximity of Roy, by the way, wasn't so exciting. I'd met him several days before and in fact was staying at the apartment he shared with Dave Kaler. So I didn't mind not getting in to see him. But Stan Lee, that was a different matter. I wasn't sharing an apartment with HIM.

The outer door opened again. A man with a bag came in. He had a pencil behind his ear. Migod, could it be Don Heck with his pencil ready to start illustrating the moment he got into the office? Or Sol Rosen, carrying a bag full of ideas for title logos? No! It was only the delivery boy bringing lunch. Picture it. Me, a BNF, sitting in the outer office staring at a silent door while this idiot who probably never even heard of Spider-Man got in to see what there is to [illegible]

The door opened and the delivery boy went out. [illegible] I knew when I saw his smile that even the delivery boy had been to Marvel Comics. The smile was obviously because Stan had paid the bill for him. And he was happy. He had seen Stan smile.

But the really hard thing was, I didn't know what was going on. They might have been batting out ideas for FF stories or maybe just struck out. They might have been illustrating the latest issue, or Stan might have been mouthing Marc Anthony's famous soliloquy (maybe he can even spell it -- imagine!). They have been having a sex orgy. Flo was in there. Maybe I should rush in in the nick of time. . . be a big hero and while saving her from those mad fiends from the other end of the office (the guys who put out Stag and like that), I can shake hands with Stan who will gratefully acknowledge my assistance.

Nah, with my luck, he'd just tell Flo to write me a letter thanking me for helping. That's all he ever does. Just tells Flo to write a letter thanking me for a copy of Slam-Bang. Thanking me for a good suggestion. Et cetera. In fact, if I called the offices and asked for Stan, I'd get Flo. Or if I demanded to see someone, I'd see Flo.

You know, come to think of it, Roy hadn't mentioned Stan too much. He hadn't described him. I should have thought he would.

Flo had said Roy was in conference with Stan (imagine being in conference with Stan -- that was even better than just interviewing Stan, or meeting Stan, of kissing his shoes). . .but. . .

Could it be that there really was no Stan Lee. That warm personality I had come to know and love was actually Flo -- she was supposed to be the woman behind the man. Maybe there was no man to be behind. Stan Lee (a fictitious name if ever I heard one) was just a pseudonym, S for Steve, T for Toth, A for Austin, N for Namor, etc. His name was just like Shazam. He wasn't even there. He was just a figment of the imagination. And there I was sitting out there waiting to meet nobody! Well, suffice it to say, that's who I met. Nobody.

The outer office is a frightening thing. Between the sign on the door and the people walking through the office who might, just might, be Adam Austin, or Steve Ditko, or even the nobody who calls himself Stan Lee -- whom men call editor -- a comic fan can go BATTY.

END (Next time, I'm going up to DC, and that's final!)

SECTION FINAL

Slam-Bang 5 is on sale. The details: 20 pages, consisting of one article, a disquisition on Superman for people with an intelligent interest in the study of the character. Price: 75¢ (envelope included). I'm aware that I could have produced a 36 page issue for 50¢ but for personal reasons, I'm charging 75¢ for this issue. There is no hard-sell involved: I personally think it is the best of the five issues, well worth the price of Alter-Ego. Order it NOW ("it" meaning SB, not AE, though you may order AE, too, if you want). Whiz-Bang's companion zine won't be advertised again (ever) so don't let it slip your mind. Send orders to me at the University of Maryland, Calvert E 201, College Park, Maryland. Be sure to put MY name on the envelope. (Make [illegible])

RAINY DAYS

Issue #5, for mailing with CAPA-Alpha October 1965

EDITORS: Don + Maggie Thompson, 3518 Prospect Avenue, Apt. #15, Cleveland, Ohio 44115.

CREDITS: This page and all illos are by Maggie. Look at the top of each succeeding page for author identification.

WAITING, WAITING, WAITING — Current news on that old address you see there on the heading is that there ain't no news. The house we want and we, ourselves, had to be appraised by the Veteran's Administration. We passed the VA inspectors (credit check and all), but the house is still tied up with inspections. Seems the VA had summer help and they didn't do a proper job appraising it the first time around (so say the realtors). About a week ago we signed a request for a reappraisal and now we wait about another three weeks (we hope no more) for that to come through. Then we see if the people now owning the house will accept the price the VA puts on the place. Then, if they do, we sign all kinds of contracts and the place is ours--in a much longer bit of business than is here described.

So we wait and fret. And you'll all know when we find out. If we get the place, of course, you'll be hearing loud exclamations of "CoA!" from us. But not for a time yet...

IN THE MEANTIME — We <u>did</u> get the thrill of buying ourselves a new record player (Magnavox AM/FM, stereo) to comfort ourselves in times of worrying about the new house. So we'll have lots of fun listening to all the records we haven't already packed away (ch, yes, people, we even had to pack away those--we have no room here at all)--all our folk music and (in order to make it pertinent in these pages) comic book stuff on records. <u>You</u> know: Pogo, Peanuts, and the Bob Newhart bit on Superman. Not to mention Freberg's <u>Face the Funnies</u>.

HAVE YOU NOTICED? Gray Morrow, of Jim Warren comics magazines fame, is doing illustrations for various children's books--mostly biographies. One, at least, is in the (bleckh) Childhood of Famous Americans Series (Eleanor Roosevelt, Courageous Girl, to be specific).

And the current issue of Playboy (October) is carrying excerpts from the forthcoming (seemingly excellent) Feiffer book on comics.

CLEVELAND IN '66, PEOPLE! The Tricon won its bid for the world science-fiction convention in 1966; this--translated very roughly--means that Cleveland will be a center for all kinds of fans come Labor Day Weekend 1966. Primarily, of course, the emphasis will be on science-fiction; we shall be attending it mostly for that. Burroughs, Hyborian Legion, and comics fans will be gathering there, too, though--along with Oz fans, Tolkien buffs, and Lovecraft lovers. Many fans are members of multiple groups--we, for example, are involved with Burroughs, old radio shows, old films, the Hyborian Legion, comic book, and sf fandoms. We'll be spending most of our time with sf fans, I suspect.

But, hey, there! All you Midwest comics fans at least should be coming to the con; there should be much there of interest. We'll let you know of forthcoming developments as best we can--as soon as we get precise word of where to send your membership money, for example, we'll let you know.

Just remember, though: Our brand new house (if we get it by then) is already booked solid, and we won't be able to house any fugitives from Wonder Woman. Stay at the con hotel and get in on all the fun. (Start planning now to have your little closed parties--who are you going to be drinking with once the program ends of an evening?) Or, if you're cheap people, there's always the YMCA (or the YWCA, if you're of that persuasion)--they're only a short bus trip away from the con hotel; you can walk the distance, if you must.

Start planning your costume ball costumes, people. Now's your chance. The JSA has already been done--as have Ibis and Taia, the old Flash, Dr. Fate, Sinestro, Cap and Mary Marvel, and Batman and Robin. That's just counting some s-f cons; we don't even have a vague idea of what's been done at comicons... Not even at all sf cons.

WE TRY HARDER No responses to any of our ads in K-a. We suspect the audience isn't large enough... Anyone else had any luck? But here goes once more.

Does anyone out there have information about or spare copies of Walt Kelly's recent series on Viet Nam? How many have there been? Where have they appeared? Want to sell 'em to us?

Doesn't anybody know what the title was to Dell Special Number 774? That's all we need to finish our listing of the Special Numbers... Sob.

GOODBYE, MISTER GRONOUSKI — The fact that Johnson now has a new Postmaster General may change things. But currently, the Post Office is playing games with ZIP Coding. Soon, we'll be forced to pack second- and third-class bulk mail by ZIPCoded sectional centers (the first three numbers of the ZIPCode). The deadline for this presorting is currently listed as January 1, 1967. This may not affect fanzines (who knows what the PO means this time around by "bulk mail"?), but it may be an evil thing, indeed. Please, kindly Mr. Lawrence F. O'Brien, think about it further?

CONSIDER THIS — The following quoted caption from American Heritage comes from Vol. VII, #1 (December 1955), p. 41. And see what it conjures up in your extrapolative minds. Is it an omen?

> The examples above, dating from 1890, and at left, from 1894, show to what broad commercial uses the poster was put before its vogue came to an end. There was, in this same period, a brief flurry of amateur poster "collecting," but the items most prized were from France, where the design and manufacture of posters had become an authentic art, attracting over the years many famous artists--Daumier, Gavarni, Bonnard, Manet--and making a deathless reputation for Toulouse-Lautrec. Nothing like this happened throughout the long Victorian age in America, where the poster was never quite respectable and therefore always retained its crude artisan's charm.

I WONDER — I wonder if some of the supposed problems in some contributions to K-a might not stem from hurried and/or careless preparation. How many out there write a draft, correct it, and only then cut it on stencil? How many think they can or actually do cut their comments first draft on stencil?

NEWS NOTES — The Return of Pogo is now out from Simon & Schuster at $1.50 the throw. Throw some its way; it's another (long-delayed) collection of Kelly's daily strips--you know the type. Some original material, as always, but primarily it's reprints.

And Sunday's Fun Day, Charlie Brown is, of course, reprints of Sunday Peanuts strips. $1 from Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. Buy it, too, just to be on the safe side. It's good for you and fun besides.

FAULTY MEMORIES — Did anyone ask Jerry what he was talking about in K-a #5 when he "corrected" the Ryans for mentioning Pat Sullivan as the creator of Felix the Cat and told them blithely that that was the work of George Herriman? I

suppose someone did, but I'll add my sorry head-shake for he who castigated an innocent youngfan for fudging up on nationwide TV on comic art data. After all, Jer, you could've looked up your information. (For the record, Herriman created Krazy Kat; Sullivan did Felix, as the Ryans said.)

And has anyone brought up the fact that Thor whonks the ground once to turn from Thor back to the good doctor, but he whonks it twice to bring hurricanes--and three times brings a maelstrom or something. But, we say suddenly, if he strikes the ground twice, he must first strike it once, n'est-ce pas? And he'll be whonging himself at a dizzying rate back and forth between identities, right? And suppose Thor just wants to switch identities back and forth quick-like for some obscure reason. Does his banging of his hammer also bring the rainstorm? And how much time has to pass between blows so's his hammer doesn't whomp up a nor'easter by mistake in addition to his change?

How about that, Roy?

UP-TO-DATE THOMPSONS Welcome to Mike Barrier; it is a real pleasure to have you with us, Mike--and let's see barrels and piles and scads of stuff from you in the upcoming issues of K-a; this well-organized, neatly-done, pointed, useful, carefully-researched bibliography of Disney items is the sort of thing that makes a great bonus to an issue of K-a. We like your stuff on general principles, anyway. When are you going to send us lotsa contributions for Comic Art?

(By "up-to-date" up there, I meant, of course, that this is a comment on a contribution to this--the October--mailing of K-a. Now let's just hope Mike made the mailing deadline--and that we do ditto.)

MAILING COMMENTS TIME AGAIN Stephen Barr: You say, "In sf fandom no laws are made against advertising material in fan type apazines, but there is similar restrictions on the amount of art that can be used in a zine to get credit for it. So the use of so much art astounded me. Most sf readers don't care for art (out side of the artists of our group) and text (any kind!) is the prime thing we're interested in, but I guess since comic fans like art, they don't mind it being used so much. Just a difference in the two fandoms, and forgot to use different standards, thats all." I don't know what sf fandom you are talking about, but it bears no resemblance to the science-fiction fandom we know. In the first place, I don't know of an apa in sf fandom which restricts the amount of credit for art. I suppose there may be one (one of the weekly apas?), but FAPA, OMPA, and the Cult--the three primary apas, I think--don't, as far as I know. In fact, when we told a FAPA member about the K-a restriction that members' contributions have to be of interest to the other members, he was quite appreciative. His apa wasn't even restricted to that extent, much less to the extent of art limits.

And sf fandom doesn't care for art? You tell me when comics fandom reaches the level of production of Project Art Show displays. Note them well, all of you coming to the Tricon next year. How many comicfan artists have reached the professional levels of such fans as Don Adkins, George Barr, Arthur Thomson, and Jim Cawthorn. Just look at Alva again. Ask an old science-fiction fan what enhancement he found Cartier illustrations used to give a story. And read the Standard mags of the late '40's and their frantic lettercolumns filled with attacks on and praises of the magazine's artwork.

Andy Zerbe: Classics Illustrated adapted "only one bad book"?!! Well, it's all a matter of taste, as Gammer Gerton was wont to say, but Silas Marner, Mysteries of Paris, and How I Found Livingstone didn't stimulate my little brain cells to fervor. Of course, they did some lousy--many lousy--adaptations (plus such books as Knights of the Round Table, which was an original with them). Oliver Twist, Hunchback of Notre Dame, Great Expectations, House of the Seven Gables, Pudd'nhead Wilson--all these (at least in their first incarnations with Gilberton) were abominably produced. (I never wanted to read Pudd'nhead Wilson; only years later, when I was on one of my Twain kicks, did I discover it is a great book.)

In mentioning Ranch Romances, you say, "I don't think RR was a great magazine, none of the pulps were." Have you ever seen a magazine called (it varied) Unknown or Unknown Worlds? There was a great magazine, no matter how you define great magazine--the finest in fantasy of those years (1939-1943) was published in those pages! Stories which have been reprinted countless times for very good reason first appeared there. The finest fantasy writers wrote for it. It was a gem, and there was never a bad issue of it printed, to my knowledge.

(For you cynics, it was not destroyed by lack of enthusiasm on the part of the reading public; it was another casualty of World War II and its paper shortages.)

What the devil are you talking about, Andy? I read Tarzan for years in the comics before I read any of the books, and I always knew he was married to Jane--that they weren't just friends. It was never, to my knowledge, kept any sort of secret. And, as to his age, I always assumed that the stories were devoted to the young Tarzan--not that he would never grow old, which is ridiculous.

Ken Russell: Well, Don and I got all the "lower halves" correct first time around. I dunno; maybe they are distinctive? As to civilian identities of super-heroes, maybe people don't recall them simply because they aren't important. People know O. Henry; not so many know William S. Porter--because that isn't his public identity.

Dennis Richard: Don't you need a new brand of ink for your mimeo? And if you used colored, 20# paper, you'd have less show-through.

As far as I know, Dick Lupoff never left any subs unfilled--though he had to work to get back some copies, thanks

to not keeping close enough track of the exact number he had on hand. So he changed his policy to keeping a more selective mailing list and not selling single copies--and everybody landed on him for that. But he didn't give away copies of his latest issue and leave those who paid in the lurch. He sold some copies--very reluctantly--to some who pressed him quite hard. (And if you've never been through it, you don't know how some people have to work to sneak their zine to you, a paid subber, avoiding those who want to buy it on impulse.) And, of course, Dick did allow extra copies--he just didn't allow quite enough.

Derrill Rothermich: Your Pogo cartoon is, no doubt, very comforting to those who flub things, but hardly apt or true. "The loudest critic is invariably the most silent when given the chance to prove he can do better!" Like John F. Kennedy? How about E. A. Poe--who criticised poetry and prose and demonstrated his criticisms by creating? And Henry James? And Leo Tolstoy, who indicted most fiction--but who wrote some of the finest fiction the world has ever seen? And G. B. Shaw, that most pungent of literary critics?

For that matter, your "wise saying" doesn't even say the critic has to do very well whatever type of thing he criticises--he just has to go at it with a will.

No, I don't think Pogo would say a thing like that... I'll stick with Salada Tea Bags--"The shortest answer is doing the thing."

Ryans: If Edith Pitt digs Bradbury adaptations in comic books, you would probably win her heart by presenting her with a forthcoming paperback from Ballantine Books: The October People. Reprints of EC's Bradbury work. Due out sometime this fall (October?)... Want us to send you a copy? Speak now.

Jerry Bails: First, has Stephen Barr really been dropped from K-a? If so, why? He's had 6 credits or points or whatever in the last two issues--didn't he pay his dues, or was he just dropped from your list accidentally?

Thanks for noting "new address soon" on our listing on the membership roster; we'll see...

Jerry, we're really disturbed by this list of proposals for K-a you have in #11. You must have the shortest attention span around. You dream up excellent projects, execute them well at the beginning, carry them along for a year or so, and then toy with them, finally tossing them to somebody else so you can play with something new. You're bored now with K-a and want more arbitrative power than you have so's you can dabble with it some more--before tossing it to someone else so you can go on to CAPrA-Beta? Everyone says fine, we know Jerry will do a good job, no matter how much power he's given. But just how long are you planning to do the job, Jer? Eh?

In the first place, you have enormous power right now. You can already reject a submission to K-a if it is:

illegible
unintelligible
libelous
illawful (sic) in any way
first-class
wholly advertising
not "on any subject of interest to other members."

These are all from the By-Laws for March 1, 1965. And it strikes me that these are sufficient causes for rejection of contributions. (Were they applied to the members whose contributions were so roundly condemned a few issues back?) You have powers aplenty, Jerry; you just haven't used them. That last phrase of the list is rather staggering, but there, all the same. (By-Law #8.)

Any more power, and you might as well write everybody's contribution for them; you'll be telling them what you want the mailing to have so it best appeals to you, and at that point you become more than a Central Mailer, Agent X.

We've got our separate tastes in fannish writings. I don't give a hang for fanfiction in comics fandom. Typo-filled and guess-filled checklists go along with story summaries (by themselves--story summaries can serve a purpose in an article) to the wastebasket, as far as I'm concerned. I'm not currently in the market for a stereo tape recorder. So I'm one person, and I'm not about to demand that these subjects be rejected as possible ones for K-a. I'll skip 'em or skim 'em, and generally do as I please with 'em. But I won't demand they be dropped or receive half-credit.

No, if anybody should receive half-credit, it's those who copy out extensive stories from other media--with no more effort than typing--and who sit around tracing the work of other artists. And we all know that both of these types of copying, properly used, can enhance a discussion or be otherwise very worthwhile. Used properly.

Those are your key words, Jerry. You're basically trying to solve the problem of poor production, poor execution, bad writing, careless layout, etc. But you're trying to solve it by rejecting, instead, approaches which can be abused. Mailing comments can be very easy to do. A sentence here, a sentence there, and you've solved your activity requirements for another few months.

But that doesn't mean that mailing comments are bad, needless, easy, or dull, per se. I now read through the mailing comments in an issue first of all. They are integral to what you told us the function of K-a was to be--that is, a letter-substitute. "Cut down on your letter-writing!" you told us blithely. "Join K-a! You'd be surprised how many of your correspondents you can take care of that way!" "Hey," we cried, "great!"

And if you're going to penalize us for writing what we like, can't the membership, in turn, demand you follow our edicts? Like returning to your great information column--which used to be the first thing I read each issue? Why shouldn't you have to produce something we really want (several members have already protested your dropping the

column)? By the time we get TCR, much of the news is already dated; K-a is the one place we can get fresh news regularly and now you've cut that off... Hey, gang, shouldn't Jerry keep up the fine work he used to do in his Agent X reports? Hey?

(Be it noted, by the way, that the issue before he came up with the "Members should be encouraged to use colored paper to brighten up the overall appearance of K-a" bit, good old Agent X did his entire contribution (10 pp.) on white paper.)

Why amendment #6, by the way? An applicant must have his initial contribution accepted by the membership (however that takes place) already. It must be of interest to the members, like any contribution. Any borderline cases and a 2/3 membership vote disqualifies those contributions. An applicant can't get more than one copy of K-a till his first contribution has been accepted.

By the way, when is the "appropriate period for discussion" going to be over for these suggested amendments--so all may vote (a process which'll take three months to get all votes in--right?)? (Which means, of course, that you kind Ryans can still get a page's credit for each page of mailing comments...)

I don't give a hang about giving double credits for color covers, but I can't really see any good reason for doing so. The effort isn't all that great to produce color covers.

Finally, why the #7 amendment at all? Seems to me you've got all the penalties built in in your current by-laws. You've set up rules to outline requirements for having a submission accepted. If a submission isn't accepted, the submitter must scurry around and get one that is--or fail to meet his activity requirement. If he fails to meet that requirement, he's dropped. Just like anyone else who doesn't produce his required number of pages. If he staples his contribution before mailing it to you, I suppose you'd be within your rights to charge an unstapling fee, though.

I can see having amendments to implement current By-Laws, but no real need really exists for changes in tne current situation, does it? K-a <u>is</u> here for entertainment, non?

Or is something else bothering you? Quite possibly (probably, in fact) I'm missing some vital point--would you care to discuss further each amendment you suggested?

(And all of us might think further just how we'd like bonus points to be used, once we've bought up all the back issues--as we just have.)

Here begin Don's commentsHere begin Don's comments***Here begin Don's

BUY Jules Feiffer has another book out, in addition to the (still forthcoming) comic book hero anthology. It's a collection of his cartoon satires from <u>Playboy</u>, <u>Village Voice</u>, etc., called <u>The Unexpurgated Memoirs of Bernard Mergendeiler</u> (Random House, $1.50 paperbound). This is great stuff and, even if you don't like it, you should buy it. After all, you owe it to him for reprinting all those great old super-hero stories and giving them respectability.

Jerry Bails: A couple of thoughts on half-credit for mailing comments (in addition to Maggie's, with which I agree): How do you rate it if I make one mailing comment, about two inches deep, on one page? Is that page worth 7/8 credit? And keep in mind that, if you grant me only half a page for mailing comments, I'll have to natter on twice as long (enabling me to make twice as many enemies).

SUDDEN THOUGHT — If a member of two fandoms is a double fan, is a dealer who deals with both comic and science fiction fans a double dealer?

WELL-MEANING ROBERT KANIGHER — I am quite impressed with the Robert Kanigher revealed in the newly-legitimized letter columns of his books, but I'm still annoyed by his mannered stories. And I think, furthermore, that he's going overboard in the wrong direction again -- the opposite direction that he's been overboard in for years. The answer to making Wonder Woman readable is not to have the incompetent Messrs. Andru and Esposito draw like H G Peter, or to reintroduce the revolting Etta Candy and her dyke friends, but to write and publish stories, not the collections of slop for retarded preschoolers he's been turning out. Kanigher can turn out readable stories -- he's done it often -- in spite of a tendency to repeat some asinine catchphrase over and over ad nauseam (most notably in his war mags). Why doesn't he do that, instead of turning the clock backward? What's wrong with straight adventure stories? If I didn't believe Kanigher meant well and was capable of better, I wouldn't give a damn, but... You do realize, don't you, that fandom will be blamed if the devolutionized Wonder Woman bombs out, as I fear she will?

FINALLY — Negroes are at last appearing in DC mags, beginning with Mr. Kanigher's war magazines. It is about time, or past time, that brown became as acceptable a skin color as green or pale blue with DC's color-conscious management.

THANKS, I GUESS? — I've been paid a few odd compliments in my time, but I can't recall a match for the one Roy Thomas presented (with his left hand) in K-a 12: I swear like an expert. Well, dadburn, Roy, all I can say is "Shucks," dang it all to heck.

Jerry: The Bill Finger article was of much interest. It should be noted, however, that Jerry Robinson, now doing the comics Still Life and Classroom Fluffs, claims he invented the Joker. (As an artist, not as a writer.) And, of course, the Batman put in Real Fact Comics claimed Bob Kane created him, for those who believe everything they read.

Andy Zerbe: Generalizations are tricky. Standard (Thrilling) Publications used house names on series, too, most notably on Captain Future. Edmond Hamilton created him, then got tied up with war work, so they announced the series would be carried on by Brett Sterling. Sterling was a house name used primarily by Hamilton, but also by Joseph Samachson. Hamilton eventually took the series back from Sterling, who had written six stories, four by Hamilton.

Dave Kaler: The kid in Moon Mullin's strip is Moon's kid brother, Kayo. I don't understand why newspaper comics don't appear in book form, either, and several people have "explained" it to me. Bill Harris, once of Gold Key, said it was too difficult to edit newspaper strips into smooth continuity (which makes some sense) and because GK utilizes a five-panel format in most of its books (which is ridiculous). Also, I'm told, writers object to losing a market for original material.

Well, I've run out of mailing comments. Jerry can now figure out on his slide rule just how much credit I'm entitled to. Jer, does one spot of color entitle a cover to double credit? As stated, it would.

OPEN LETTER TO MORT WEISINGER (WHO DOESN'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO CLOSED ONES)

A while back, World's Finest ran a story with Superman and Batman competing with a world of super-gamblers. In the course of the story, Supie outwitted the gamblers twice, once in a dream and once in "real life." In the dream, when the blindfolded S'man threw darts at a batch of balloons with faces of his friends painted thereon, he hit Batman's balloon, thus dooming Batman. Quick like a bunny, Supie altered the picture of buddy Batman into a picture of himself, thus canceling the bet. Can anyone deny that that was cheating?

The second time, in real life, Supie used a magnetic asteroid to win a race with another gambler. Can anyone tell me the difference between this and the use of loaded dice?

I wrote these questions in a very polite letter to Mr. Weisinger and that's the last I ever heard of the matter. I'm still trying to get a workable defense of Superman's behavior. Why did the Code (mighty defonder of youthful morals) pass this, which is, to my mind, far more reprehensible than the stuff they censor, for this has the endorsement of Superman himself; Supercheat, that is?

For news of the 1966 Cleveland Science Fiction Convention,

WATCH

THIS

SPACE!

nothing happened, did it?

WHIZ-BANG

Dear Jer,

I've uncovered something which will absolutely croggle you. I was downtown in my favorite newstand thumbing through the super hero comics when a boy obviously about 13 years old walked in an moved toward the comic books. I didn't know him but feeling a comaraderie with my fellow super hero fan, I moved aside to let him get to the super hero box. I decided that I would start a conversation with him and that as soon as he picked out a comic would remark on his taste and, just to impress him, rattle off publisher, editor, writer, artist, inker, letterer, colorer, and sales figures.

Well, Jer, you can imagine my surprise when he walked to the funny animal box. I watched for a few moments, too startled to speak. Plunking down my Marvel comics, I blurted, "You still reading that kiddie junk?!'

He looked at me with a sneer usually accorded only to hopeless cripples in an "I am an American Day" parede. I had the feeling, which later proved correct, that he was used to this reaction which is considered unfair. "What makes you think these are for kids?"

"Well, for one thing, the people are animals, and they aren't funny and anyway, only 5-year olds read that junk!"

"You know, people like you who talk before they think should look before they leap. I'll have you know these are works of art, classics of their style, which truly reflect our society. And if you can enjoy something in pre-teenage, there is no reasonwhy you can't enjoy it when you are a teenager!"

His argument was vaguely familiar but I was confused. "You mean you enjoy that alliterate junk -- Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny, etcetera?"

"Not only enjoy it but write about it!"

Now here was a real shocker. "Write about it?"

"Yeah, in these amateur magazines which people like myself publish. You realy have to see one to understand!'

"You write about this junk?" (I couldn't believe my ears!)

"People who read super hero shouldn't throw muck!"

I explained to him that I understood what he meant. That, surprise! surprise!, I belonged to a super hero fandom which he'd never heard of ((ASIDE: Let's take a vote; of those of you who ~~kn~~ actually read Grammar Without Tears, as I suggested you do previously, how many think I shouldn't have ended this sentence with a preposition?)) I told him I never heard of

funnies fandom -- but he was surprised because they had a big write-up in Golden Magazine and Highlights: "They weren't too fair, calling us fugitives from a funny farm!" (Jer, are you sure Bill Harris never mentioned this fandom to you? Maybe you better ask him next time you write.)

It turned out that the lad was the patriarch of his fandom. He had formed it from scratch, by publishing a neighborhood newsletter for his comic reading friends. Somehow, the word of this newsletter leaked out all over the world and right now, that newsletter is a full-blown, photo offset fun-zine (as they call them). It has a total circulation of 2000! I didn't know there were that many mental midgets in the world -- reading funny books indeed! But I didn't let him know that I thought he was an imbecile.

I have to admit, though, that his fundom has made great strides. Every year, they have an official poll which determines "Best Writer," "Best Artist," "Best Hero" (which is subdivided into "Animal," "Ghost," "Human," and "Other," so Archie won't have to compete with Uncle Scrooge), "Best Cotton Tail Drawer," "Best Mouse Drawer," and "Best Super Hero" (which this year was won by Wonder Woman).

They have formed a type of government. The boy I was talking to had led it for a few years but had finally retired because it was too much work. Now he only published two funzines, handles the "Funny Animal Lending Library," helps tally the votes in their poll, travels around the country visiting other fans, prints ditto masters for other fans on his own printing press, buys/trades/sells old, rare comics (like Bugs Bunny 41 which, to a 13-year old is very rare), and attending school regularly.

Lately he has been fighting "creeping socialism." It seems that many members of fundom think prices are far too high onold comics (Prices are exorbitant, after all -- prices rang from 50¢ for comics from 1959, to $1.00 for comics between 1951-1959 -- which is as far back as any of these kids go). A large number of fans believe that only by regulating prices can fundom expand. Otherwise, high prices will discourage fans.

The reason this regulation is being faught is simple. The supply of old (circa. 1950) funny animal comics is limited. Most parents threw them awey as fast as the kids could buy them. In fact, the only two sources of funny books from the "Golden Age" are barber shops and dentists' offices (neither of which is entirely satisfactory: comics from the barber shop are filled with hair, mangled, bent, and torn, while those of dentists' offices smell like dental floss, and are mangled, bent, and torn). At any rate, the books are rare, hence sought after, hence valuable, hence, hoarded. Which is just as well becauseonly by keeping these few rare books in trustworthy hands can they be preserved. It doesn't make much sense, but then neither does collectin funny animal books.

Another problem involves "dud-zines." You see, Jer, the majority of these fans are under eight years old. Consequently, they have the writing and reading ability of seven and eight year olds (except for the five and six year olds who can't read or have a sixth grade reading/writing level; and there is one know three year old who can't read but likes the pictures and a 33 year old who can't read, but who looks at the pictures and laughs a lot). This all means that when people like this "patriarch" of fundom write their zine, they unintentionally write on a 13-year-reading/writing level, which is above the ability of the readers. The kids can't understand these dud-zines.

Several people have suggestes that a code of Ethics be created which outlaws works of more than three syllables, works with more than one meaning, sentences with more than two commas or one dependent clause, and paragraphs of greater length than four sentences. Also, there is talk of limiting the creative ability displayed in these dud-zines. But this idea will never be approved by fundom. Maily because most can't figure out what "creative ability" means.

I had hoped to act as super hero fandom's ambassador of good will, trying to get these kids out of the funny books and into the more sensible literature -- the super heroes. I therefore broached the topic of mentality to their leader for the second time. I knew it to be a sore spot so in returning our philosophical discourse to the question of age-suitability I employed all the tact which I have displayed in so many other areas. I said, diplomatically, "What are you guys, idiots or somepin'? Funny Books! Really!"

The boy looked at me, smiling indulgently. After a while, he finally said, with the sagacity of hard experience: "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me."

I saw no point in continuing -- he was too stubborn. I probably should have mentioned, however, that what he said may be true in funny fandom, but in super hero fandom, the reverse is true:

Sticks and stone won't break my super bones
but dirty words and obsenity will ever harm me
(or at least Paul Noslander and the CCA
think so.)

Sincerely,
Rick

PS: Yes, gang, I misplaced my super-dupper eraser. Hence the above mistakes. But it doesn't matter. What's a few "maily"s between friends?

By the way, the above WAS promised several months ago. I could tell you that it didn't apear because I needed to do extra, extensive research into fundom beca (darned typewriter) before compiling the above Index; but I don't think many of you would believe me. The simple fact is: I wrote the last column after promising this column (which was written many months ago) and decided to push the last one ahead for several reasons (most because it was only two pages and I was short of cash).

I think I had better warn everyone now about what the next columns are going to be like. Starting next issue, I will begin presenting a serial entitled, "Blah!" Or "Super-Person Strikes Again!" The first installment is mainly non-sense with a few jokes thrown in to break up the monotony. But after that -- everything is fair game, including sex, religgion, typing mistakes, humanity, advertising, Marvel Comics and many others which have not yet been written into this comic script extravaganza. I've only written three chapters so far but if they are any indicatio , I may never finish this story. It isn't really funny, though you may get a chuckle or two from it. Just don't expect to roll over in the aisles.

On the other hand, there are a few Whiz-Bangs coming up similar to the last few. These will be used as the ocassion demands to break up the monotony of plot, counter-plot and ocasionaly typing and spelling errors (such as infrequently ocurr in this column). Also scheduled for upcoming issues of Whiz-Bang is a serious note or note as we may possibly expand from a regular two pages to a standard four.

Much will depdn on the printing of this issue. Namely, if Bob Jennings does it. If he doesn't do this printing job for this issue, then you'll never know it for this won't be published (is it neurotic to talk to yourself with a typewriter?). If he does print it, then you will see it, and if you see it, that means we will probably be four pages often in the future. If you don't see it, forget I mentioned it.

By the way, the strange word appearing in the first sentence of the above paragraph, "depdn," is code for "depend."

As you read this, I will have returned from the Comicon, as will have many (especially since this may be published in late August). Don't think that such a momentous occasion will pass unnoticed in the pages of Whiz-Bang. Even as I write these historic words, my mind races to that future Whiz-Bang which will discuss my adventures at the Comicon. I wouldn't be surprised if I end up (at leastiin Whiz-Bang) in jail for something or other. I haven't figured out what but you can bet it will be stupid.

The New Improved Whiz-Bang starts next month.

THE PUBLISHING HISTORY OF THE WALT DISNEY COMIC BOOKS, 1933-1962

A Few Introductory Remarks

This is not an index to features, although it resembles Howard Lotter-man's data sheets in many respects. It is, rather, a chronologic view of [illegible] publication on a monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or annual schedule. It is a record of when regular publication began, the course it took, and when it ended (if it has). The cutoff date for this index is [illegible], the date of the switch from dell to Gold Key. Only the [illegible] are covered here, since the comics themselves split off so many titles, and brought other significant changes as well. [illegible] publication was continued under Gold Key, but this is mentioned in the notes after each title. Additions and corrections are welcomed.

Mike Barrier
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Fayetteville, Arkansas

Notes

(1) MICKEY MOUSE regular publication often began with a number after 0. 1; this was because dell counted the four-to or issues which preceded publication --and sometimes numbering--began. For example, the LL [illegible] began publication with No. 4; this meant that there had been three issues in the Four-Color series. There were occasional deviations from this pattern, and these are mentioned in the notes after each title.

(2) [illegible] reference to code dates is made throughout the notes for brevity. Each code date usually appeared at the bottom of the first page, after the comic book's title on the number of that issue. For example, [illegible] translates as "Dell's title [illegible] No. 101, 1947, seventh month, or February, 1947." It should be emphasized that the code date was not the month in which the comic book was published, although one-month and one-and-a-half code-dated issues usually appeared at the same time as those comic books' cover-dated February--which is to say, in December and January. Under Gold Key, on the other hand, the code date at the bottom of the first page represents the month of publication. The code date corresponding (roughly) to the old dell code date is to be found in the upper left hand corner of the cover, under the trade mark, and after the title's code number.

MICKEY MOUSE MAGAZINE

Mickey Series

1933: 1/1-1/9 (Mon., Jan. through Sept.)

[illegible] Series

1933: 1/1-1/2 (Mon., starting with Nov.)

MICKEY MOUSE MAGAZINE (Cont.)

1934: 1/3-2/2 (Mon.)
1935: 2/3-2/12 (Mon. through Oct.)

Third Series

1935: 1/1-1/4 (Mon., starting with Sept.)
1936: 1/5-2/3 (Mon. except Jan.)
1937: 2/4-3/3 (Mon.)
1938: 3/4-4/3 (Mon.)
1939: 4/4-5/3 (Mon.)
1940: 5/4-5/12 (Mon. through Sept.)

Notes: (1) The first MICKEY MOUSE MAGAZINE was evidently a children's magazine of the traditional type; this is pure surmise, however, since not even Walt Disney Productions has any copies in its files.
(2) The second MICKEY MOUSE MAGAZINE was a 16-page giveaway, distributed by various local dairies; it was left by the milkman along with the milk. It was not in comic-strip format, but contained illustrated stories about Mickey and Minnie Mouse, emphasizing the importance of drinking milk.
(3) The last MICKEY MOUSE MAGAZINE was a children's magazine, not a comic book in its inception, although comic-strip influence (use of speech balloons, etc.) was evident from the earliest issues. Reprints of Mickey Mouse daily strips were added in 1937, and, later, reprints of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Silly Symphonies Sunday pages. Most issues contained three to five pages of comics, of a total of 36 pages (counting covers). In the last issue, however, the page count was expanded to 68, with 34 pages of comics.

WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES

1940: 1-3 (Mon., starting with Oct.)
1941: 4-15 (Mon.)
1942: 16-27 (Mon.)
1943: 28-39 (Mon.)
1944: 40-51 (Mon.)
1945: 52-63 (Mon.)
1946: 64-75 (Mon.)
1947: 76-87 (Mon.)
1948: 88-99 (Mon.)
1949: 100-111 (Mon.)
1950: 112-123 (Mon.)
1951: 124-135 (Mon.)
1952: 136-147 (Mon.)
1953: 148-159 (Mon.)
1954: 160-171 (Mon.)
1955: 172-183 (Mon.)
1956: 184-195 (Mon.)
1957: 196-207 (Mon.)
1958: 208-219 (Mon.)
1959: 220-231 (Mon.)
1960: 232-243 (Mon.)

WALT DISNEY'S COMICS AND STORIES (Cont.)

1961: 244-255 (Mon.)
1962: 256-263 (Mon. through Aug.)

Notes: (1) Monthly publication has continued without interruption under Gold Key.

MICKEY MOUSE

1952: 28 (Bi-mo., starting with Dec.-Jan. 1953)
1953: 29-33 (Bi-mo. except Dec.-Jan. 1954)
1954: 34-39 (Bi-mo.)
1955: 40-45 (Bi-mo.)
1956: 46-51 (Bi-mo.)
1957: 52-57 (Bi-mo.)
1958: 58-63 (Bi-mo.)
1959: 64-69 (Bi-mo.)
1960: 70-75 (Bi-mo.)
1961: 76-81 (Bi-mo.)
1962: 82-84 (Bi-mo. through April-May; last issue dated July-Sept.)

Notes: (1) There were 28 Four-Color issues.
(2) Bi-monthly publication within the Four-Color series began with No. 3[illegible], Aug.-Sept. 1951.
(3) Publication under Gold Key was quarterly for a few issues; bi-monthly publication was resumed in 1963.

DONALD DUCK

1952: 28 (Bi-mo., starting with Nov.-Dec.)
1953: 27-32 (Bi-mo.)
1954: 33-38 (Bi-mo.)
1955: 39-44 (Bi-mo.)
1956: 45-50 (Bi-mo.)
1957: 51-56 (Bi-mo.)
1958: 57-62 (Bi-mo.)
1959: 63-68 (Bi-mo.)
1960: 69-74 (Bi-mo.)
1961: 75-80 (Bi-mo.)
1962: 81-84 (Bi-mo. through Mar.-Apr.; last two issues dated June-Aug., Sept.-Nov.)

Notes: (1) There were 29 Four-Color issues.
(2) Bi-monthly publication within the Four-Color series began with No. [illegible], July-Aug. 1951.
(3) Publication under Gold Key has been bi-monthly.

[illegible]

1953: 4 (Quarterly, starting with Dec.-Feb. 1954)
1954: 5-8 (Quarterly)
1955: 9-12 (Quarterly)

THE [illegible] OF THE [illegible]

UNCLE SCROOGE (Cont.)

1956: 13-16 (Quarterly)
1957: 17-20 (Quarterly)
1958: 21-24 (Quarterly)
1959: 25-28 (Quarterly)
1960: 29-32 (Quarterly)
1961: 33-36 (Quarterly)
1962: 37-39 (Quarterly through Sept.-Nov.)

Notes: (1) Publication under Gold Key has been bi-monthly

CHIP 'N' DALE

1955: 4 (Quarterly, starting with Dec.-Feb. 1956)
1956: 5-8 (Quarterly)
1957: 9-12 (Quarterly)
1958: 13-16 (Quarterly)
1959: 17-20 (Quarterly)
1960: 21-24 (Quarterly)
1961: 25-28 (Quarterly)
1962: 29-30 (Quarterly through June-Aug.)

[illegible]

1958: 5-8 (Quarterly, starting with March-May)
1959: 9-12 (Quarterly)
1960: 13-16 (Quarterly through Dec.-Feb. 1961)

SPIN AND MARTY

1958: 5-8 (Quarterly, starting with March-May)
1959: 9 (Quarterly through March-May)

WALT DISNEY PRESENTS

1959: 3 (Quarterly, starting with Dec.-Feb. 1960)
1960: 3-6 (Quarterly through Dec.-Feb. 1961)

ZORRO

1959: 4 (Quarterly, starting with Dec.-Feb. 1960)
1960: 9-12 (Quarterly)
1961: 13-15 (Quarterly through Sept.-Nov.)

Notes: (1) There were 14 issues of [illegible] in the Four-Color series. Two [illegible] only issues in that were "Walt Disney's Zorro," since the others were [illegible] Disney obtained the right to the character. For a [illegible] see [illegible]'s checklist in CAPA-alpha [illegible], reprinted in RATATOSK No. 1.

LUDWIG VON DRAKE

1961: 1 (Bi-mo., starting with Nov.-Dec.)
1962: 2-4 (Bi-mo. through Mar.-Apr.; last issue dated June-Aug.)

ANNUALS

CHRISTMAS PARADE: Published each year, 1949-1958 (No. 1-No. 9), except for 1957, when it was replaced by CHRISTMAS IN DISNEYLAND No. 1.

VACATION PARADE: Published each year, 1950-1954 (No. 1-No. 5). With No. 6, 1955, the title was changed to PICNIC PARTY. The last issue of PICNIC PARTY was No. 8, 1957.

SILLY SYMPHONIES: Nine issues, published on the following schedule. No. 1 - code-dated Sept. 1952; No. 2 - Sept. 1953; No. 3 - Feb. 1954; No. 4 - Aug. 1954; No. 5 - Feb. 1955; No. 6 - Feb. 1956; No. 7 - Feb. 1957; No. 8 - Feb. 1958; No. 9 - Feb. 1959.

DONALD DUCK BEACH PARTY: Published each year, 1954-1959 (No. 1-No. 6).

MICKEY MOUSE SUMMER FUN: No. 1 published 1958; with No. 2 (1959), the last issue, the title was change to SUMMER FUN.

ONE-SHOT "ANNUALS" 1953-1959

PETER PAN TREASURE CHEST (code-dated Jan. 1953)
1. MICKEY MOUSE BIRTHDAY PARTY (Sept. 1953)
1. LADY AND THE TRAMP (June 1955)
1. DONALD DUCK IN DISNEYLAND (Sept. 1955)
1. MICKEY MOUSE CLUB PARADE (Dec. 1955)
1. MICKEY MOUSE IN FRONTIERLAND (May 1956)
1. MICKEY MOUSE IN FANTASYLAND (May 1957)
1. UNCLE SCROOGE GOES TO DISNEYLAND (Sept. 1957)
1. MICKEY MOUSE ALMANAC (Dec. 1957)
1. DONALD AND MICKEY IN DISNEYLAND (May 1958)
1. HUEY, DEWEY & LOUIE BACK TO SCHOOL (Sept. 1958)
1. DISNEYLAND BIRTHDAY PARTY (Oct. 1958)
1. SLEEPING BEAUTY (Mar. 1959)

Notes: PETER PAN TREASURE CHEST was an unnumbered, 50¢ comic book.

ONE-SHOT "ANNUALS" 1959-1961

22. HUEY, DEWEY & LOUIE BACK TO SCHOOL (Oct. 1959)
26. CHRISTMAS PARADE (Dec. 1959)
30. DISNEYLAND U.S.A. (June 1960)
33. DAISY DUCK AND UNCLE SCROOGE PICNIC TIME (Aug. 1960)
35. HUEY, DEWEY & LOUIE BACK TO SCHOOL (Sept. 1960)

ONE-SHOT "ANNUALS" 1959-1961 (Cont.)

38. UNCLE DONALD AND HIS NEPHEWS FAMILY FUN (Nov. 1960)
39. MERRY CHRISTMAS (Dec. 1960)
47. MICKEY AND DONALD IN VACATIONLAND (Aug. 1961)
49. HUEY, DEWEY & LOUIE BACK TO SCHOOL (Oct. 1961)
53. UNCLE DONALD AND HIS NEPHEWS DUCK [illegible] (Nov. 1961)
55. DAISY DUCK AND UNCLE SCROOGE [illegible]AT (Sept. 1961)

Notes: (1) In 1959, Dell abandoned sequential numbering of its annuals, and set up a series similar to the Four-Color series; all 25¢ comic books were published as part of this series. Numbering began with No. 21.

Much of the most important Disney material is not covered by this index--most notably, the dozens of Disney one-shots published as part of the Four-Color series. Artists whose work has appeared in the Disney comics in this series include Carl Barks, Walt Kelly, Norris Hollub, and Russ Manning. There were still more Disney one-shots in the early Dell color and black-and-white series, and there were many Disney giveaways published in the 1940's and early 1950's, some illustrated by Kelly and Barks. All these comics are outside the scope of this index.

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I plan now to prepare several more capsule indexes of this sort, covering other Dell "funny-animal" titles like LOONEY TUNES, WALT DISNEY'S and OUR GANG, as well as a very detailed index of the LITTLE LULU comic books. There is still some information I need, however. For example: When did the funny animals like Andy Panda first appear in THE FOUR-COLOR? It seems clear that Andy Panda, at least, made [illegible] about a few issues before No. 65. Also: When did OUR GANG become OUR GANG WITH TOM & JERRY, and when did OUR GANG WITH TOM & JERRY become TOM & JERRY COMICS? What was the publishing history of the Leon Schlesinger characters like Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig before LOONEY TUNES began publication in 1941? Did LITTLE LULU make any comic-book appearances before her Four-Color debut in 1945? I can use almost any information about LITTLE LULU and her creator, Marge Henderson, especially newspaper and magazine articles, or photocopies thereof.

I'm also greatly interested in the giveaways produced by K.K. Publications and Western Printing & Lithographing Co., especially the FRIENDS OF DISNEY series begun in 1947. My list of these giveaways is substantially complete, but I could still use information on numbers, artists, format changes, etc., especially for the early issues--and copies of the giveaways themselves, if anyone has any he would care to sell or trade.

By now, some of you may be wondering just who I am, and, perhaps even more, How I Got This Way. I'll try to explain that in my next contribution.

Mike Barrier
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Fayetteville, Arkansas

THE HOUSE OF GAS

Typed by [illegible]

In spite of the radical nature of the [illegible] to release the film he [illegible] Tarzan Arrives, most [illegible] Adventures, will come [illegible] you with short [illegible] with Rexana Sangria in the much-discussed [illegible] Jewel in the Crown. Angel Strange [illegible] as the gypsy king in the [illegible] Brandt, Bill Carradine in the third [illegible] Brandstav Gorodnisk, a [illegible] Russian [illegible] Kalandra version, [illegible] Field, directed by [illegible].

K.R.K. Publications [illegible] Western Beloved Lives and Caribbean Corpse [illegible] or [illegible] is currently [illegible] Rice-Burroughs above the possibility of [illegible] Jed from Rory's story to [illegible]

New MS manuscripts [illegible] Rice-Burroughs about the existence of [illegible]

Weary Continents (Sept 1, 1955, published by [illegible] by one foot from a vine [illegible] your Jesus show her who [illegible] the whip that tamed the [illegible] the jungle for Tarzan [illegible] is advertised for only [illegible] strong enough to cut through [illegible]

The Lost Man's Valley [illegible] reported on page [illegible] age 124, celebrated his birthday [illegible] description overhanging [illegible] the branch of a tree, [illegible] twenty feet to the ground, [illegible] Later dangerous." It keeps me [illegible] and to be I could [illegible] a few moth-eaten moose. I had to give it up, [illegible] the Canadian Wildlife [illegible]

"The Mike Muggeridge Show" (Sept 6, 1955, had as [illegible] noted Fleet writer who [illegible] has gotten an injunction [illegible] about the Tarzan-type male as a [illegible] fun with people and animals [illegible] his conversation was edited out of the [illegible] aspects of Tarzan's relations with [illegible] particularly [illegible] were interesting and the night [illegible] Mike's contact [illegible] the [illegible]

THE CROSS OF FIRE

By Paul E. Moslander

The small South Carolina town of Cameron was having its first Civil Rights march, composed of a file of placard-carrying Negroes flanked by armed deacons. Barring for them was an assortment of more-than-militant segregationists from both local Klaverns of the United Klans of America and the regional Imperial Order of the Ku Klux Klan, as well as stray unattached "civilians". Mr. Benjamin Cameron had tried to pacify the whites and marchers, and is now returning from a talk with the marchers assembled at one end of the main street. Attorney Ralph McKenzie and United Klans Grand Cyclops Ed Dugan accompany him...

As they went back up towards the square opposite the courthouse, McKenzie could see that the men had divided. Most were still by the courthouse steps, looking restless but apparently calmed down for the present by Cameron. Some were drinking beer, though, on the porch of Gambrill's Hardware. One was propping his foot up on one of the boxes of axe and pick handles set out conveniently. The lawyer felt a tensing chill of apprehension. He looked at Ben Cameron and saw the owner's hawk eyes raking over the scene, appraising, weighing, judging.

There were eight men, seven of them United Klansmen, at least two of whom were suspected Holy Terrors. Eight men, with guns, prominently on top of the conspicuous axe handles...and the more passive ones who might try to restrain them were twenty yards away in front of the courthouse. Cameron didn't like it. He smiled, though, the town's hero and leading citizen, tall, strong, and a figure of dignified authority in his flowing robes as Grand Dragon of the Imperial Order of the Ku Klux Klan of America. Normally confident of his abilities, he felt even surer of himself in the electrifying Klan garb.

He headed on over to Gambrill's and the other two men naturally followed.

" Hello, Ted. The beer looks good - got three spare cans? "

" Snucks, Ben, I'm almost out - only two left. You 'n Ed drink up while I look in the back for some more. C'mon, Ralph, I think we've got some cold stuff in the fridge still. " The storekeeper took a step inside, a friendly grin and perfectly innocent eyes beaming from his weasel's face.

McKenzie smiled back tightly. " No thanks, though I appreciate the offer - in the same spirit in which it was offered, of course. "

Gambrill looked hurt. " Now you don't think that I - "

" Like hell I don't. " The lawyer propped himself against a porch rail. " These axe-handle specials of yours come along once every third blue moon. Maybe you don't want civilized men around when trouble starts. Remember the last time, Ted, election? " He grinned coldly. " They took eight stitches in your scalp, didn't they. I don't think the knot has gone down yet. Shame that handle slipped out of some clumsy fellow's hand in the fight, wasn't it? Too bad you had to be in the way. But that's Providence, isn't it? Chickens coming home to roost. "

Gambrill wasn't smiling. " Yeah - Providence. Providence with a .38 shove. "

" Come on, now, Ted, " Cameron clapped the hardware man on the back. " McKenzie was just reminding you that anyone can get hurt when violence starts. You'd better watch these specials of yours. Your timing is bad. They tend to give people ideas - ideas that I don't like, myself. Say some hothead decided to take a swing at some of those nigras there. Well, now, if he did, those deacons would get mighty irritated and shooting might start. Once it did - well, nobody is going to tell a bullet just who to hit and who not to. So I'd be protecting my interests and yours if I poked that fool up before he could start anything and fed him the axe handle, inch by inch so as not to make him sick - all at once. " His tone was gentle but his eyes were serious.

" Now, Ben, y'all wouldn't be fightin' 'gainst yer own kind, spec'ly 'er them niggers, now would yo'? " One of the suspected Holy Terrors looked at Cameron sharply over his beer can.

The Grand Dragon shrugged. " If anyone's out to cause trouble, he certainly isn't

my kind. You fellows keep trying to make me out as some kind of nigger-lover. Now, I don't hate any man because of his race, religion, or politics, unless he starts stepping all over my race, religion, and politics. Of course, I can't say that I'm going to exactly go calf-eyed over any nigra, Catholic, Jew, or Communist. And surely everyone has his place, and ought to stay there. However, I am going to do my double-damnedest to see that nobody - nobody - even the Devil himself, gets hurt unless he starts something. I've said it before and it makes enough sense to say again. If we'd just let those boys march on through empty streets, with nobody watching, all they'd do is feel foolish, and then maybe they'd go home and forget their fool ideas."

"How's you at followin' that, Gran' Cyclops Dugan?" asked the sharp-eyed merchant with the cane. The walking stick's steel tip tapped lightly on the weathered porch floor, but the thuds were resonant from the lead weight the cane's end.

"Well," the stocky United Klansman looked uncertain. "You know that Ben's always been a straight thinker, 'n not what you'd be wantin' to call the McKenzie kind. It wasn't a direct reference to the lawyer. The man's a 'integrationist stud' and made him a local phrase." And, now, you're all knowin' how I feel on these here nigger marches, but...uhhh."

"But y'ain't about t'buck ol' Ben Cam'ron, eh? Lead'ways not while he a stand-in' b'side'ya." The non-Klansman of the group tossed away his beer can. "Looks like y'all'd better fin' y'selves 'nother Gran' Cyclops," he grinned. The man, of the local white lightening still, he was more than loaded with beer.

"Watch them cans, Sam, fellas," Gambrill complained. "Don't want no litter now, do we?" [illegible]

"Speakin' o' litter, here she's a-comin'." The one with the cane stood up, giving a test whack to a porch post. The wood dented with a thump that didn't even scar the loaded cane. "Be a-seein' y'all if'n you ain't worth beatin' on, white men," he sneered as he started for the street, then stopped and pivoted.

The file of marchers was just coming into the square between the courthouse and Gambrill's. The Deacons on both sides looked warily at the two groups of whites. One had his head turned back as he walked and McKenzie saw with a chill of fear that he was watching three figures keeping pace with the column some ten yards back. They wore the black leather hoods and aprons of Holy Terrors and were carrying what looked like cattle prods, devices not often seen in that part of the country.

The lawyer's flesh crawled involuntarily as he remembered the night the group of similar terrorists for the White Knights of the K. K. K. Klan had paraded burning cross on his lawn and had come for Meg and him with worse unusual things. If he hadn't already taken to keeping a shotgun handy by the door, McKenzie and his wife would have been tortured into convulsions. He thanked the Lord she was at the Imperial Order had run the White Knights out of the region not without some judicious use of a Louisiana blacksnake on the hides of more rabid racists' rumps.

He looked around suddenly at the sound of savage cursing and saw Ben Cameron relieve the swearing merchant of his loaded cane.

"Now, I told you I'd try to prevent any kind of trouble." "

McKenzie interrupted him. "Then take a look at those Terrors back there, Cameron. That's real trouble."

The robed Grand Dragon glanced at him. "You just keep watch on them your self, counselor."

The cowled trio was starting to close in, swinging their prods from side to side in grim unison. Suddenly, from behind the mimmery store next to Gambrill's hardware, four other masked figures appeared, heading toward the Terrors. They were costumed Klansmen in the ulster overcoats and insignia of the Imperial Order, wearing full head pieces. Not about to argue with the armed, these bare-handed they carried shotguns that stared uncompromisingly at the three Klansmen. Only they and Cameron knew the guns held birdshot, and the three pulled up short.

"Damn y'traitor's filthy guns, Ben Cameron!" One of the White Knights on the porch lunged up suddenly, grabbed an axe handle and swung wildly at the Grand Dragon. Almost without turning, the robed doctor ducked, reversed loose the handle, and buried the end in the other's stomach. As the attacker doubled, gasping, Cameron backhanded him over the porch rail into a running heap on the street.

McKenzie was as distracted by the action as [illegible]

but one. The lawyer almost missed seeing Billy, the pock-faced mechanic, sight his squirrel rifle squarely on the Grand Dragon's back. Paralyzed for an instant, McKenzie lashed out a kick that sent the shot wild to one side, across the square. He felt a hand grip his shoulder like a small vise and jabbed savagely with his elbow.

Gambrill cursed and let go, to smash the attorney squarely in the face with a right. McKenzie collapsed in temporary blankness into two half-rising men. They kicked him out of the way and headed for Cameron. One brought his shotgun barrel down on the Grand Dragon just as the Imperial Klansman swung at the civilian, Sam. The slashing blow fell short of Cameron's skull, but cracked across his shoulder with an audible sound like a muted version of the merchant's cane snapping the courthouse fence rail. The doctor's staggered in mid-blow.

Sam rocked back, just the same, as he caught Cameron's rock-like knuckles in the teeth and howled. He came up with a left, though, that sounded satisfactorily into the Klansman's midsection. Already off-balance from the shotgun, the Grand Dragon fell - down but definitely not out.

The ulster overcoat of his costume ripped buttons as Cameron's foot swung the leg up past the point even the loose costume would allow without ripping. His foot sank into the shotgun-bearer's crotch with all the agony a brass-toed riding boot could pack. As the man went down screaming, the doctor kicked him expertly in the side of the head to make sure.

A shotgun boomed and the other attacker howled as birdshot laced his back and neck. Off-balance from a attempt to jump up and come down head-first on Cameron, he tumbled out into the street, almost at the feet of a deacon who had left the marcher's column.

The armed Negro snapped a warning shot five inches from Sam's head and the man froze, his axe handle raised to split the rising Grand Dragon's skull. Without a word the Deacon turned and rejoined his group, letting the doctor come up with a left that smashed his paralyzed target through Gambrill's gun display window.

McKenzie staggered to his feet, his vision doubled momentarily and a rush of blood from his nose running down his face. Grand Cyclops Dugan, who had forced Gambrill back into the doorway at the start of the attack and had been keeping him there with sheer bulk, half-stepped forward to catch the sputtering lawyer. He thought better of it, though, and stepped back again.

He was slow, though, and Gambrill had his chance. His face livid, the hardware man edged by Dugan at last. He grabbed McKenzie by the collar, transferring all his pent-up rage into hatred for that one man.

"Damned fat-ass outsider." He cursed, shaking the groggy figure, then kneeing him in the groin savagely.

McKenzie doubled, his mouth wide with silent pain, but he jerked his head up viciously to catch Gambrill right under the jaw with the full impact of his hard cranium. Teeth gnashed and loosened as they ripped into the hardware man's lower lip and tongue. His eyes fogged.

Cameron, using his good left arm, caught Gambrill by the collar and hurled him into the street, on top of a dazed United Klansman struggling up. His arm paralyzed, his right shoulder throbbing as if it were pulsed, the Grand Dragon nonetheless stood upright and glared at the carnage, then at the Civil Rights marchers who had watched it all in tense anticipation.

"All right," for a moment he couldn't find his voice. "All right, you've... damned well done your... damage, now go... get the bloody hell moving..." His eyes flashed fire. "Go!"

Looking at the blazing eyes of the Klansman, his face framed by the hood of his costume, and his body arrayed in the garb, but commanding finery of a Grand Dragon, the marchers went. Quickly, and quietly, they went - but heads upright and unbowed.

Pulling off his hood and sinking his sweating head, Ben Cameron stooped over one of the sprawled men and resumed his civilian role as Demorton's practicing doctor.

McKenzie, gasping for breath off to one side, shook his aching head in respect. There was a real man, and real men... if only they came in life like in books, instead of being not completely perfect and not always as admirable in thought as in stature.

The cluster of men by the courthouse broke up silently, and further away the costumed Holy Terrors sheepishly slunk off under the eyes of the Imperial Klansmen...

SHMOZ 4

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THE IMMORALITY OF THE COMICS CODE

This is a continuation of an article I began in SHMOZ #3, in K-a #8. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to finish it at the time, and circumstances forced me to drop out of CAPA-alpha entirely. Now I'm back, and I'd like to take up where I left off.

The Comics Code, I have found, has come to be regarded by many as a sort of necessary evil, the lesser of two; regrettable as this is, there are actually people who think the Code is a good thing. This latter attitude I find extremely repugnant; hence this article.

In the first place, the "code" is definitely not a code — it is an excuse for the exercise of personal bias against whatever the censor or censors care to object to for any actual (as opposed to stated) reason at all. It is a rubber code, which can be stretched to almost any desired length, merely by appropriate interpretation of the word "excessive" or other such undefined and, objectively, undefinable pseudo-concepts.

With one or two exceptions, the Code does not forbid anything specific, merely excessive violence, excessive gore, excessive sex. Nowhere is the amount of excess spelled out or even hinted at. It is entirely at the discretion of the censor. This isn't a code — it's a license to destroy.

Well, what whould the code be like?? What should it forbid and what should it permit? This depends upon, of course, what the purpose of the code is. As it stands, the Comics Code does not have a strictly defined purpose. It is supposed to protect the morals and possibly the sanity of the presumably juvenile readership of comic books; however, the CCA has never spelled out the nature of the moral code it is, presumably, attempting to enforce; nor has it obtained the services of competent psychological authority — which would more likely than not inform it that censorship is more harmful than helpful.

In other words, the CCA is attempting to protect and enforce a morality which is undefined because it is undefinable because it consists not of a well-thought-out, rational structure of logic, but rather of a hodge-podge of whims, wishful thinking, and outright fantasy, which varies according to who is currently doing the censoring.

But we still haven't determined what the CCA's code should be like. And there's a good reason for that — mainly, it shouldn't.

Censorship is essentially a totalitarian concept. Basically, it is an assertion that the public is too stupid to know what's good for it, while the censoring body (the government, in most countries and in some states of this country) has somehow, by the

virtue of being appointed to their positions, latched onto some kind of preternatural intelligence which enables them to decide for all the people what they should and shouldn't see, read, or hear. Please note that such contempt for the people's ability to live their own lives has been the excuse for every sort of attempt at dictatorship, whether of the fascist kind (where the government runs everything but permits business and industry to remain, in name, the property of the legal owners) or the socialist kind (which is at least more honest in that the government owns things outright).

The CCA and the old Hays Office which censored movies are rather anomalies in that they were not government operated or even government sanctioned; the psychologies of the censors is obviously the same; without a rational, logically constructed system of morality, no matter the basic premises, it is not possible for any honest person to censor anything except upon the basis of whim. And in any event, the only persons who are going to accept the job of doing the censoring will be those who believe that their whims are somehow divinely protected from, at least, serious error, while the great American public consists, at least in great part, of people without sense enough to come in out of the rain.

In other words, censorship for any rational purpose is, in practical terms, impossible. Further, it is quite immoral.

Consider: The only types of people who support censorship movements are:

1) Those who feel that others must be protected from stimulation of their "baser passions";
2) Those who want their children protected from certain types of literature (or movies or tv);
3) Those who wish to establish precident to assist them in later suppressing certain ideas; and
4) Those who just like power and see jobs as censors as means to obtain it.

I hope that I do not have to go to the trouble of refuting the attitudes of the last two groups. I have already discussed the case of group 1) above; the ones who believe that individuals will abuse their freedoms if someone doesn't abridge them for them. As for number 2), these consist of parents who are unwilling to accept the responsibilities of raising children but employ none of the various means available for avoiding parenthood; to this extent, at least, they are still children themselves, and their judgment is hardly worth considering.

As a matter of fact, there is a fifth group, which cannot be discounted -- these are the people who, unthinking, accept the claims that the censors have the Good of Humanity at heart and that therefore they must be right to some extent (which is a fantastic non sequitur!), and therefore concede that the censors are, at worst, the lesser of two evils. Despite the lack of logic in their position, this group is extremely powerful by reason of their sheer numbers; these, therefore, are the most dangerous, since they are the club behind the censors' threats.

Let's look at their position more closely. They admit that, to take this particular example, the Comics Code is evil; they claim, however, that it is less evil than no censorship whatsoever. Well, let's examine both alternatives and see how evil each is.

Without censorship, we have the situation of publishers forced to turn out products acceptable to a greater or lesser segment of the population or go out of business. This means that the people have control of what is and is not published. Each individual thus bears the responsibility for what he does or does not buy, and thus shares the responsibility for what the publishers print.

When, however, some agency interferes with this relationship, it is, in effect, abridging not only the constitutionally established freedom of the press, but also doing some other things:

1) It abridges freedom of will of the readers, by arbitrarily preventing them from supporting the sort of publications they wish to buy. Notice that while this can be a perfectively defensible action when it is a corollary to some laudable aim, in this case it is the purpose of the censorship.

2) It, in effect, establishes religion, since the morality which the censors attempt to defend is not universally accepted — in fact, actively opposed by many people. The fact that it may be a private organization rather than a government agency doing the censoring does not mitigate the offense, except legally; it is quite morally defensible for anyone to present his ideas to the public — this is the meaning and reason for freedom of the press; it is quite indefensible for anyone to prevent anyone from presenting his ideas.

The censors, and those who support and sympathize, claim that certain types of published material are harmful to the young and immature. They have been claiming this at least since the times of the Roman emperors. As yet, they have failed to prove their case, notwithstanding the sensationalistic publications of certain self-proclaimed authorities. In any case, the publishers certainly have no obligation to do anything other than produce what the public will buy; a philosophy which claims otherwise cannot be consistent and logical, which means it cannot correspond to reality. This is because, to be consistent, such a philosophy would have to demand that each of us is responsible for each of the rest of the three billion of us on this planet, and quite obviously such a philosophy is incapable of being put into practice. Thus, censorship could be called immoral on the grounds of calling for the practice of a moral code which contradicts actual fact, which amounts, in the long run, to suicide; I do not, however, have time or room to expound this argument in detail; it would take at least a half million words — and has — and a much better writer than I.

In sum, therefore, the code which the CCA attempts to enforce is immoral because it violates at the very least three of the most important freedoms we have; and its purpose, aside from being one of the aforementioned violations, goes against the basis of intelligent thought in being unrealistic. Since the CCA cannot demonstrate that it has any saving grace, it stands damned as immoral from start to (let's hope soon) finish. Q.E.D.

ATOM